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1) MOORE (G. F.).

Aborigines of Australia,
Swan River,
Western Australia,

and other Papers on

2) Western Australia,

Not by Moore

Printed about 1834-40.

Several Engravings of Aborigines added, but, of more recent date.

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Photo by Mr. J. W. Rayfield

Menzies.

A MENZIES TRIBE.

27353/p O.S. 96. All from Colonial Magazine, 1841/5

Moore, G.F.

GROUP OF NOR'-WEST NATIVES.

ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA.—SWAN RIVER.*

DOMESTIC MANNERS.

THE aboriginal race of this territory have not any marriage ceremony, according to our idea of the term. Female infants of eleven or twelve years are betrothed† or appropriated by the father to some person,

* We are indebted for this interesting description of a most singular people to Mr. G. F. Moore, the Judge-Advocate of Western Australia, who has contributed materially by his talents and philanthropy to develope the resources of the colony.—EDITOR.

† The infant girl is given over to the future husband, together with a firebrand. She stays one day, and then returns, until of riper years, to her parents. Should the man to whom she has thus been given die, the betrothment holds good for his brothers.

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whose favour, friendship, or assistance it may be desirable or politic to acquire or secure. These girls are given into the possession of this person at a very early age, when they stand in the mutual relation of "kardo" to one another; which word appears to express the state of a married person.

Two, and even three wives, are often possessed by one man; which is a common cause of complaint among the young men who are not so fortunate as to be provided with any, and which forms a frequent source of jealousies and heartburnings among the women, and gives rise to so many instances of infidelity and elopement, as to keep the men in a constant state of watchful anxiety or contention.

Adultery is punished by beating or wounding the woman, and having a sort of combat, like a duel, between the offending man and the husband. The seducer often receives the spear of his antagonist without throwing in return; when the affair is ended. Indeed, the whole matter appears rather in the light of an offering of satisfaction for insulted honour, than an exacted revenge for any serious injury; and the writer has been given to understand, that when such an occurrence happens with a young girl before mature, it is looked upon as a very venial offence.

Uterine and half-blood brother and sister, and I believe also those standing in that relation by adoption, do not marry; butI am not aware whether the restriction is carried further.

The authority of the husband is frequently exercised in a most harsh and tyrannical manner over the wife: she is his servant, his slave, his attendant, bound to acquire and share her vegetable food with him, whilst in the division of the animal food, which he procures, his share is that of the lion.*

Except in very early life, neither parent has any power over their children. The authority of the mother soon ceases, especially over boys, who, in many instances, appear to treat her neither with respect nor attention.

Frequently a warm attachment subsists between a man and woman, especially where there has been an elopement, the result of mutual desire. Parents show very strong affection for their children.

The huts, under which they shelter themselves here in cold and

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* The condition of the women is, as among most savage and unchristianized nations, a hard one. Marriages, with them, are not productive of large families. See Meinéila, p. 208.

rainy weather, are of a very temporary and simple construction.* Spears of the zanthorrhæ, or long slight sticks, are stuck into the ground, generally in the form of a segment of a circle—the tops of the sticks, inclining to one another, and to a common centre, the outside of this framework is then thatched over with the long grass or green slender leaves of the zanthorrhæ or grass-tree, or sometimes covered with the bark of the paper-bark tree.†

In the interior of the country, where such materials are not to be found, I have seen them formed by logs leaning against an overhanging tree, and covered with leafy branches of close-growing shrubs. The opening is turned away from the direction of the prevailing storms. The usual size of the hut is from four to six feet in diameter, and about four feet high, shaped either like a pent-roof, resting on the ground, or the vertical segment of a bee-hive, perfectly open in front, where the fire occupies the open space.

Their food consists principally of an animal called "dat-yah," and a vegetable called "maryne." They will eat any thing that either walks, flies, swims, or creeps, with very few exceptions; but they eat it whilst fresh, and will not touch tainted meat. All the varieties of kangaroo, opossum, bandicoot; all birds, save hawks and owls. The callow parrots seem a delicious morsel of fat; and honey, upon which the young brood are fed, is collected by the mothers from the nectaries of flowers; all fish, ‡ from the whale to the minnow; snakes, lizards, turtle, tortoise, crayfish, frogs, and a sort of marrow-like grub, which they get from trees, § the taste of which varies, according to the substance upon which it feeds, and the tree from which it is

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* No permanent villages, such as Sturt found in Central Australia, have been discovered on the west coast. Generally they are content with forming a screen, to windward of the broken boughs of trees, to protect themselves and the little fires round which they huddle at all seasons.

† A species of meleleuca, having a thick outer covering or bark, composed of many folds of a minutely divisible paper-like substance.

‡ They have an aversion to sharks and rays, and the same fish are equally rejected by the inhabitants of Sidney and the eastern coasts; though why they do so, is unexplained. It is remarkable, that in Western Australia we taught them to eat mussels.

§ From the zanthorrhæs, or the grass-tree, or black boys, black wattles. Those from the zanthorrhæs have the flavour of chestnut; they are found in abundance under the bark of a genus encalyptus, when first beginning to decay; but these have an astringent taste. They are found also in the jacksonias and the acacias. When the bark of a living tree in which they are found is struck, they make a sound like the ticking of watches.

taken. With respect to all these, I consider the native, when not pressed by hunger or in dread of interruption, to be an Epicurean in his taste, fastidious in the good condition of his food, and particular in his cookery. The juice and red gravy, which are always carefully retained in the meat, give it an appearance of being eaten nearly in a raw state; which is by no means the case. On an expedition in the bush, I had a brace of wild ducks roasted by a native in a most scientific manner, and I remarked that he enclosed a piece of live charcoal in the body of the fowl, to ensure its perfection. I can also speak from experience that their mode of dressing the cobbler-fish, by wrapping it in bark and stewing it in hot embers, is excellent. Their vegetable food consists of the roots of orchidonis and other bulbous-rooted plants; of a root called by them "wirrang," which appears to be something of the yam species; a root like a large turnip, called "kanno;" the root of a large flag-rush, called "yandjete," which is roasted, powdered, and baked into bread, tasting like barley-bread; the pulpy rind of the nut of the zamia, called by them "baio," which is first steeped in water or moist earth, in order to discharge its poison, and tastes like decayed cheese; a few berries, which can scarcely be called fruits; the roots of several species of hæmadorum, called by them "gnolia-matja-bohne-mien; also the roots of a Boerhavia, and of a wild parsnip; gums of all sorts, which are abundant in the season—they frequently envelope the gum in the rind of the root of a species of Encalyptus, and chew it—they say the juice of the bark helps to dissolve the gum; honey from the flowering cone of the large Banksia and some other flowers, and extracted from the flowers of the Encalyptus "Macrocarpa" (red gum), by steeping them in water; a large green-fleshed fungus, growing in sandy soils, and several sorts growing upon trees. They will not eat our mushrooms, which grow in abundance. These are their principal articles of food.

In some parts of the country, in summer, the only water obtainable is found in trees, which they "tap," either from a previous knowledge of the tree which has been resorted to before, or from certain appearances on the bark of the tree, which indicate the water concealed within.

Their clothing consists solely of a cloak, formed of the skins of the kangaroo species, worn over the shoulder, and fastened at the throat, reaching to about the middle of the thigh. These cloaks are provided with some care, dried, and scraped, and oiled. The hairy side is worn next the skin. The men wear a belt round their waist, formed of threads spun from the fur of the opossum. In this their stone-headed

hammer, called "kadjo," and the carved weapon, called "kily," are worn. A similar band is worn round the head, and sometimes amulets round the upper part of the arm; in both of which, tufts of the feathers of the cockatoo and emu are tastefully disposed.

From a very early age, boys are accustomed to throw at one another or at a mark, in play, with reeds or slender rods, or light spears; and as they generally accompany the men in their skirmishes, or in pursuit of game, they soon become expert with their weapons, either in war or the chase.

It has been told, with reference to more than one settler who has been butchered by the natives, that the boys have been ranged by the men, at different distances, and inured to such deeds, by being practised to aim at the most vulnerable parts of their writhing victim. This was the case with Nesbitt, the soldier, who was murdered at the Murray, and whose tongue they cut out, to prevent or put an end to the poor fellow's cries for mercy.

According to the estimation in which the deceased has been held, the obsequies are attended with more or less of ceremony. I have given all the details of one burial which I witnessed, in the newspaper of Saturday, May 12th, 1838; to which I beg leave to refer the reader for particulars.

THEIR SOCIAL LIFE.

In all parts of this colony which I have visited, comprising from 100 miles north of Perth, down to King George's Sound, every thing leads to the conclusion that the inhabitants are all of one race. The language is radically the same, though spoken with a variety of dialects, gradually blending into one another; and it is worthy of observation, that all the known vocabularies of the language of different parts of Australia present so many instances of identical expressions, as to strengthen the belief that they are derived from some common stock. The conformation of their heads and bodies is the same; the cast of countenance is the same, although different shades of hair are perceptible; their habits are the same; their weapons are the same. It is ascertained that at some distance to the north, shields are made use of, which are only known here as rare curiosities, and are still less known as you go to the south. The curved weapon, fashioned something like a coarsely-shaped sickle,* called "kily," may have its prototype in the

* This instrument is employed both in the chase and in war, and has the singular property, when thrown forward, of turning back in its flight from some distance to the spot from which it was impelled.

This throwing-slute, is a thick flat board, boat-shaped, and brought to a point at both ends. See Meesicula MSS.

German keilè, and is said to be traceable to the clama of the remotest ancients; whilst that singular instrument by which their spears are propelled, is said to be derived from the amentum of the ancients also.*

I do not consider them divided into tribes, according to our sense of the word. Those who frequent or belong to any vicinity naturally congregate together for society, assistance, and mutual protection. These people appear to be more particularly designated with reference to the localities which they frequent; but there are certain general terms sometimes used among them with reference to the residence of people, which seem rather indicative of direction than description of locality—as the Waylo men, which is a term used equally here and at King George's Sound, for those living immediately to the north; and the Daran men, which is used equally here and at York, for those living immediately to the eastward.

There is not, in my opinion, any one acknowledged head or chief of a tribe; but, of course, the strongest, shrewdest, and most daring, will exercise an influence over the rest.

The tribes are therefore but the result of two or three families frequenting the same neighbourhood; the most influential man is the chief; his authority is like that of a father over his family, or an elder brother over the younger, and only extending so far as he may be respected or dreaded.

Protection from the intrusion of strangers, and assistance in defence, in avenging quarrels, in resenting injuries, or in revenging deaths, is expected from each individual.

To effect some common object, tribes do often join for offence or defence; and they seem to me to have judicial meetings, either for the adjustment of differences, the ratification of friendship, the exchange of commodities or products of one place for those of another. †

The district which the father occupied or ranged over, is claimed by the sons; they assume a proprietary right to the animal and vegetable products of it, and resent any unauthorized encroachment upon a use

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* The spear is the one weapon used by all the Australian tribes; on it they depend for protection and subsistence. It is equally necessary to them under every circumstance. It is a formidable instrument in war, slight as at first sight it may seem, whilst it serves them to kill game, and to dig up roots.

† These meetings for the interchange of presents are called "Munja," and one principal ceremony seems to be the presenting of five sticks to one another, which by some are placed upon the fire, and by others are thrown about the ground.

of this property. One of the most serious skirmishes which I have seen among the natives was occasioned by the resentment of the sons of Midjigoroo, for the firing the country, and destroying the game on the district opposite to Perth, on the other side of the river. Each party was supported by their respective friends, and the quarrel became general. The right appears to be vested in individuals, and there is not a spot of ground which is not claimed by some person as his district.

[To be continued.]

Photo by Kirton and Co.

SOME BUNBURY NATIVES. Bunbury.

name, substituting in its place [illegible]

He displayed but an indifferent judgment in fixing on the site of the

* Continued from p. 240.

of the Imperial Parliament; and that the ministers of the crown, if satisfied that the royal prerogative had been unconstitutionally exercised in 1820, have still the power in their own hands to give it efficacy and force by an appeal to the three estates. If the question were mooted in Parliament, we have no doubt that a large majority would be found to contend, that the union had been beneficial to the island of Cape Breton, and that the existing connexion ought not to be dissevered. Our next article will be devoted to an exposition of this argument, of the real intentions and motives of the two parties who are arrayed in Cape Breton on this question, and to a summary of the able and eloquent debate held in the assembly of Nova Scotia, on the 17th of April last.

[To be continued.]

ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA.—SWAN RIVER.*

THEIR PUBLIC LIFE.

THEY have not the faintest glimmering of any ray of religion,† nor any shadow of a form which might indicate that they had ever been enlightened on the subject, nor are they possessed of any knowledge of a Supreme Being; upon this subject their minds seem an utter void—a blank sheet of paper—a *tabula rasa*. They have a horror of some imaginary creature, called Waukal,‡ which inhabits deep waters and dark places, the description of which is that of a snake of monstrous shape, and may possibly be some traditional trace of the evil serpent. They dread also the unfriendly visits, the malignant influence, and the hostile power of what they call Djangah, or Chingah, which answers to our idea of spirits or ghosts. Rheumatic and other local pains they attribute to the bite of this being; they consider fire as powerful to avert its influence, and carry a lighted brand at night to repel its attacks. The unpleasant dreams of night-mare are supposed to be its visits or its freaks. It is singular that this is the name by which the white people are designated among them, and that at Sydney and on the Murrumbidgee, as well as on the shores of Western Australia, they have claimed many of the whites as their relations returned to visit them

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* Continued from p. 315.

† The aborigines of Australia dread the effects of an *evil* spirit or deity; and the religion of *fear* always distinguishes the savage from the Christian, whose religion is *love*.—EDITOR.

‡ They believe in the existence of two beings called Gujot and Manjut.

from the other world;* all which tends to show that they came from beyond sea; and the place of departed spirits is the last home of their forefathers.

What their ideas were on the subject of the immortality of the soul before the writer came among them, it is not easy to discover. That they believe in, or rather have a presentiment of a state of existence after death, appears evident from the custom of keeping a fire burning for a long time beside the grave of the deceased person, and from some vague idea of living where the Waukal and the Emu inhabit; but the belief is now very prevalent among them that they are changed into white people, and return to live upon the earth in that state.†

They believe firmly in a magical power called "boha," which they consider to be possessed by certain individuals, whom they respect as friends and physicians, but greatly dread as enemies, who have power to exercise evil influence upon them at a distance, even to the extent of sickness and death.

They have no laws of moral right and wrong, and but little regard for these qualities abstractedly, farther than they may happen to be personally affected by the one or the other. For any injury the only mode of redress is by the spear. They are wonderfully candid in their confessions; but truth and falsehood seem nevertheless to be greatly influenced by interest and convenience.

Their laws and customs, which are simply to do as their fathers have done, are upheld by the general voice of the old or influential men, and enforced by the threat of the spear, or of banishment from the neighbourhood of the tribe.

Private and personal offences are looked upon as matters of private and personal quarrel, which are settled generally by a sort of arranged combat, like a duel, attended by more or fewer of the friends of either party, according to the nature of the offence. The excitement consequent upon these occasions sometimes leads to a more general quarrel; but mutual friends, disposed for peace, interfere, and by exhortations, and by holding the excited till their anger has passed away, they restore tranquillity. When any thing is deliberately done, which tends either to insult the honour, to injure the resources, or to diminish the strength of a tribe, the matter is taken up by the whole tribe, and satisfaction is sought by them in a body, accompanied by as many

* See Armstrong.

† In Western Australia, and in the eastern lowlands about Sydney, there are certain restrictions laid upon the eating of some animals by the young men and women; and a similar custom prevails among the South Sea islanders.

friends as they can muster; and if the offending tribe are equally resolute in protecting the offenders, a severe contest takes place, and much bloodshed often occurs. But although I have known as many as twenty persons to be more or less severely wounded, I have never known a life to be taken in open fight. Either by some general understanding they do not aim at vital parts, or they are very expert in defending their bodies, the wounds are principally upon the limbs or in fleshy parts of the body. Upon most of these occasions the poor defenceless women suffer severely; the bloodthirsty spirit of the men seems to be appeased by inflicting wounds upon them. The quarrel is often compromised in this way, and their sufferings appear to excite very little either of commiseration or of resentment, even on the part of their husbands. The only approach to judicial proceeding is this:—When any serious offence is committed, which affects the tribe, the matter is talked over and discussed by the grown-up or old men, and they arrange amongst themselves the nature and extent of punishment of the delinquent—as wounding with a certain spear, and in what part of the body, and to what extent, or that such and so many persons shall throw such and so many spears at such a distance at him; or they doom him to banishment from them for a certain time, or sometimes even to death; in which latter case the man generally flies, if he has intimation or suspicion of it, and remains in banishment till he can manage to compromise the affair by submitting to a less degree of punishment, or offering to sustain the combined attacks of his implacable foes in open fight; after which he is considered free. It may be remarked here, that when a person is denounced as doomed to death, he is seldom killed in an open manner; every advantage is taken, every stratagem is used, every treachery had recourse to; the spear armed with quartz, which is considered an unfair weapon on ordinary occasions, is used whenever the intentions are deadly or determinedly hostile.

The very condition of this people is most peculiar and anomalous, and presents a picture of human life which is worthy of attention and study. They afford a specimen of a race of beings living in the simplest and most elementary state of human nature, and exhibiting an instance of a people who have neither wholly relapsed into barbarism, so as to have lost all traces of former civilization, or who have not yet learned to take the first steps in advance from the rudest state of primitive savage life. The present is all their concern—the past or the future is as nothing. They are wholly occupied in gratifying the feeling of the moment, whether it be of hunger or repose, of revenge,

or some more sensual appetite. Most of their usages struck us at first at being peculiar; but many of them have now ceased to attract much observation, on account of their familiarity. There is one which I have not been able clearly to comprehend, and indeed they themselves seem unable to explain it satisfactorily:—They are distinguished nominally into two general classes, which in this district have the names of Toondarup and Ballaroke; at the Vasse river of Niemungo and Yungaree, and at King George's Sound, of Wotamat and Manytemat. The etymology of the two latter terms would indicate a relationship to the pigeons and the white cockatoos; Wota being a pigeon, and Manyte a white cockatoo; and the term "mat" or "matta," which is literally a leg, is used by them generally to express some degree of relationship, connexion, or affinity. The term in use at the Vasse River are said to express two varieties of kangaroos; which is not unlikely, as "yangore," or sometimes "yangorey," is the generic name for the kangaroos, and of which, in my opinion, the word kangaroo is a corruption; and it is not a little singular that that name, which was first applied to this animal by Captain Cook, does not appear to be now used by the natives on the eastern side of this island.

The two classes above alluded to intermarry only in this way; that is, a Toondarup man marries a Ballaroke woman, and *vice versa*, and the children of a Toondarup father are classed as Ballaroka—the children of a Ballaroka father, as Toondarup. This sort of classification appears universal, and may at some time assist in affording a clue to trace out their origin. The denomination Toondarup and Ballaroke seems very extensively used.* A native of the Swan River district once concluded a conversation with me on the subject in this way:—"Yes, see what a great people we are; at King George's Sound, the Watamat and Manytimat are a little people, but we, from below the Murray River, all by York and to the eastward, and all to the northward, as far as you can go—ay, as far away as England (was his literal expression)—there are Toondarups and Ballarokes—what a great people we are!" There are also in use among them several other

* I have since discovered ten or twelve local names or distinctions of families, but they all seem to resolve themselves into four, which may import four original families, or perhaps only two distinct families, as, for instance, the Donderups and Ballarokes, are "matta," leg, "kain," one (literally, one leg), one family—I suppose, blood-relations. The Nakgamokes and Notaks are "matta kain," or blood-relations to one another, but the Donderups and the Naganokes are not "matta kain," not kin.

phrases, indicating different degrees of relationship or acquaintance, as "nakaloke," "noyung," nanning," &c.

There exists also a usage amongst them, that all who are included within certain degrees of kindred, whether by actual consanguinity, or by adoption, which is very common among them, are considered bound as by a solemn obligation to render assistance and protection to one another in any enterprise or danger, and to revenge the death of any one of their circle by taking the life of the offender or of any one of his relatives, kindred, or tribe whose life may be of equal value and importance with that which has been lost. This usage, which probably had its origin in the adjustment of the balance of power, has now assumed the shape of a sacrifice necessary to appease the spirit of the deceased. This custom affords almost the only security which they have of life. The killing of any one draws down upon the offender and his tribe the determined and deadly hostility of all the circle of kindred mentioned above; and these people are so singularly interwoven by marriage and interlaced by the ties of adoption, that the circle is often very extensive. The relatives set out on their errand of revenge in stealth and in silence, devoting themselves to the task like the assassins of old, and taking little rest night or day until the object is achieved and the revenge accomplished. Hence the news of a death spreads consternation among the devoted tribe; they know of the necessity of revenge, but they know not upon whom the blow will fall, and until it has fallen each is in anxiety for his personal safety. A scene which has just been enacted, or perhaps is not yet finished, will serve to illustrate this part of the subject in a striking manner.

Narral killed his wife because she would not love him; Nandery, her uncle, expressed his determination to revenge the deed, Narral met Nandery, and killed him, and fled; Werang pursued him for sixty miles, and left him for dead, but he survived. Doorbap, the friend of Narral, was denounced. Mauli Megat killed Doorbap. The friends of Doorbap meet with Mauli Daubain, the brother of Mauli Megat, and left him for dead, but he survived. Doorbap's friends again went out, and Mauli Megat was betrayed to them by Tomghin and killed. The friends of Doorbap have now sent a message to the friends of Mauli Megat that they are satisfied if the others are satisfied.

The ceremony of boring the cartilage of the nose of the boys gives occasion also to another sort of relation between the operator and the patient, involving the duty of protection on the one hand, and confidence on the other. The exchange of names produces also another tie of amity and bond of union between individuals. There is also fre-

quently formed, between persons not otherwise connected, a tie of brotherhood, which implies a strict alliance in the closest bonds of friendship.

Their mode of communicating the death of a friend, by the messenger sitting down upon the thighs of the other, and embracing his body, breast to breast, cheek to cheek, whilst the other puts his hands under the messenger's thighs,* and awaits in mournful silence the whispered announcement of the name, is very striking. They are most careful to avoid mentioning the name of the deceased for a long period after the death. The relatives and friends rub their foreheads with charcoal in the time of mourning, but parents make rings round their eyes or marks on their foreheads with chalk or white earth. I have seen many carry boughs about with them, which seemed to be recognized either as a symbol that a death had occurred, or that the revenge had been accomplished.

The boundaries of the lands claimed by them appear to be described with reference to springs, wells of water, or pools in the beds of rivers, or by hills; but, as far as I have been able to ascertain, they are neither very accurately defined nor very strictly attended to.

I do not think they ever transfer their right in land to another, so as to abandon or renounce all use of it themselves; but I believe it is not unusual for them to invite others, and give them permission to range over the ground with them, thereby securing the friendship, assistance, and protection of the invited person. I know one instance of this in my neighbourhood.

The sons naturally continue to range over the same grounds which they have been in the habit of frequenting with their father. I believe this is the principal rule of inheritance.

Rheumatic affections are very common among them, the pains of which they generally ascribe to the bite of the "djanga." Common cutaneous eruption is very prevalent, which seems to be an indigenous disorder, as they give it the expressive name of "djip-djip." Many of them are also affected with what has very much the appearance of scrofulous sores; colds and coughs are frequent among them, and sometimes these colds fall upon the lungs, and bring on consumption, of which I have seen two instances myself—one in the case of a boy,

* The custom of putting the hands under the thighs was in use among the Jews on occasions of solemn adjuration; and another custom, similar to what prevailed among the Jews, is, that the widow of a deceased husband belongs to the surviving brother.

about twelve years of age; the other of a young man, of about twenty-eight. They suffer greatly from tooth-ache.

They have no knowledge of medicine, nor of any remedial art, save the pretended magical power of the bolia doctor, whose mode of cure somewhat resembles the hand-exercise used in animal magnetism. A ligature above the wounded part, pressure over the part affected by internal pain, and topical blood-letting by scarifying the place with a piece of quartz, were their only methods before our arrival amongst them. They are now glad to avail themselves of the medical remedies and surgical skill of the white people on all occasions. But it may be observed, that such is the astonishing tenacity of life with which they are endowed, that they survive the severest bodily injuries in a manner almost incredible; and such is the readiness with which their flesh heals, that any wound on the fleshy part of the body occasions but little inconvenience to them.

Though their language seems sufficiently and abundantly full for all their purposes, I do not think it copious, but rather limited in expression, and simple and elementary in its construction. Nouns, pronouns, and adverbs are connected together, and regulated by a few simple inflexions of verbs. They have no expressions for abstract ideas. The affections of the mind, as of joy, grief, enmity, reconciliation, forgiveness, &c., are expressed with reference to the state of the heart, as whether it be good or bad, or well or ill, or hard or soft, or the like. They have no form of expression for a wish or want—two ideas which it is natural to suppose they would have been most conversant with. It is quite impossible to render the Lord's prayer at all literally, and even scarcely intelligibly, by any paraphrase in their words. But it must be confessed that much of the difficulty may possibly arise from imperfect acquaintance with their language. Few have had leisure, opportunity, or inclination to bestow much pains in the acquirement of that, which, if it had been obtained, would so inadequately reward their labour; and of those few scarcely any have thought of ascertaining and examining its rules of grammatical construction; so that on these points I would be understood to speak with some diffidence. Since I have seen the grammar, published by Mr. Threlkeld, of the language of some of the tribes on the eastern coast, I have been staggered and struck with somewhat incredulous surprise, at the complexity of their language as given by him. It does seem strange, that the rudest and simplest people on the face of the earth should possess the most complicated language, and should be able to invent a variety of inflexions of verbs which were never dreamt of by those nations who

were most refined in the use of language, and most sedulous in its cultivation. They have no term for any number beyond three, and their mode of counting beyond that is by two-and-two, and two-and-two and one, and so on. They divide the year into five or six seasons, as cambarung, djibbah, gayrow, peroke, bonore, and magore. Many persons have formed vocabularies of the most familiar words and phrases, but no person has published anything of the sort except an individual calling himself Mr. Lyon,* who, some years since, gave in the newspaper of this colony a list of many words and phrases; but as it was done at an early period of our acquaintance with the natives, it contains many inaccuracies. Mr. Armstrong, the interpreter, speaks the language fluently by ear. Lieutenant Grey has lately been taking lessons from him, and giving some attention to the study of it. Mr. Alfred Bussel has also bestowed some pains upon it.

From 150 miles north of Perth, to perhaps an equal distance east from King George's Sound—say for six hundred miles of coast and one hundred miles inland—natives have been conversed with, and the language is radically the same, and spoken with less difference of dialect than prevails in England.† At the extreme of those limits the principal difference is this—as you approach the interior and the south, the final syllable of many words is omitted; as "boon," for "boono," a tree; "katt," for "katta," a head; and the sound of *e* in where is substituted for the sound of *o* in ore—as "quetjy," for "quotjy," a bone; "kwely," for "kwoly," a name; and I have little doubt if there were the opportunity of examining it, there would be found the gradual blending of one dialect into another, but with so many instances of identity of expression, as to show that the entire language was radically and originally the same. In Mr. Threlkeld's grammar several words are completely identical, and many are similar; in a vocabulary given by Mr. Collins many are identical, and so in one given by Mr. Scott Hinde; and, what is very singular, in a list of words which were used in Caledon Bay, which list is given in Flinder's Voyages, several of the words are completely identical.‡ The alphabet here possesses no sound

* Since this was written, a vocabulary has been made by Lieutenant (now Captain) Grey, on which he has bestowed much time and trouble.

† Lieutenant Grey, who has returned from an expedition to the northward since this paragraph was written, states, that he conversed with some natives at Shark's Bay, and that the language was nearly the same.

‡ An opportunity for comparison of the languages or dialects spoken round the different parts of the island would be very desirable. Would Sir John Barrow, or any other such person similarly qualified, and having authority to procure or require vocabularies from the several colonies, consider it worth his attention to undertake such a work?

of the letters *s*, *b*, and *p*; *d*, *t*, *k*, and *g* are almost confounded, so as to be indifferently used for one another respectively. There is a nasal and guttural sound very common in the language, which may be represented by *ng*. It is said to be like the Hebrew letter *gnain*.

The strongest inducements which I have found to their attachment, have been to supply them plentifully with food, without exacting any return for it; to talk jocularly with them, to humour their caprices, to amuse them as children, and sympathize with their amusements; to make companions of them, to take them out on hunting or shooting expeditions, to appear to think highly of them, and to put no constraint upon their inclinations. Yet, even after every endeavour on your part to anticipate their wishes and satisfy their desires, such is the force of acquired habit on the natural restlessness of the disposition of the savage mind, that in no instance has the attempt to retain them been permanently successful. They break away from the dull routine of civilized life—they want excitement—they rejoin their companions—they resume their old habits with a zest increased by the interruption; and it is but too often the case that they turn the knowledge which they have thus acquired of our ways, against the very persons who have taken pains to instruct them. There are, however, some instances of partial civilization, which hold out hopes of encouragement. Two boys, called Bellik and Tunagwirt, have lived at my place for nearly three years, coming and going in their irregular manner, and principally engaged in tending sheep and cattle whilst they staid. Tunagwirt, who was of a docile disposition, being rather a delicate lad, and threatened with consumption, voluntarily employed himself in reaping, during two successive harvests, and became quite expert in that occupation. Before another harvest he left my place, and was induced to go to another person, with whom he engaged himself for the reaping at a stipulated price, to be paid in money and clothes; and he remains in the same service still, doing all the work of a servant about the house. But Bellik, now on the verge of incipient manhood, has betaken himself to his old life again, and, if he is not much belied, he headed a party of natives in plundering a remote wheat-field of mine upon a late occasion.*

With respect to the probable origin of this people, it is impossible to collect from them any information calculated to throw the faintest light on the subject. They have few or no traditions, and no traces of

* These lads subsequently returned to me, and have remained with me several months. November, 1839.

art which would serve to show a connexion with any other people. They have a very vague idea of their ancestors having arrived from sea on the back of a turtle, and that the dead go through the sea again to the land of their fathers. Yet they have also in this neighbourhood an idea that their ancestors came down from the hills upon the low grounds; and it is strange, that at the Vasse river, when questioned about something which occurred there long ago, they said, "It cannot be very long ago, for this place was then under the sea." There is a cavern in the neighbourhood of York, which has at one end, rudely sculptured in the rock, a circle, intersected as if by parallel and meridional lines, and having forms of open hands designed on the face of the rock around it. It is said that similar appearances, but of a superior style of execution, are observable in caverns on the north-west coast, and the ideas of the natives seem all to lean to that direction. Very large univalve shells, which are said to be passed from hand to hand as presents among them, have been found even at York, which is seventy miles inland, and which shells they universally assert to be brought from the north-east quarter. Two of their weapons—the carved stick, called "kily," and the instrument called "mēro"—are of such a singular nature, and so unlikely to be invented by a rude savage, especially the mēro, that the use of them in common with any other people, would go far in my mind to establish a connexion with that people. I do not recollect that such weapons are described as belonging to any other nation; but I have been informed, that in the Maldive Islands weapons of a similar use and construction have been observed. This certainly is not a quarter to which one would naturally or readily look for a connexion; but if the fact be so, it is worthy of observation.

What a singular race of beings! Shrewd and intelligent, yet not possessing even the first rudiments of civilization; utterly ignorant of art or science, yet able to obtain a ready livelihood, where a civilized being might be starved; knowing nothing of any metal, possessed of no mechanical tool, and yet able to fashion weapons of a most formidable description; having neither house nor home, domesticating neither bird nor beast—for their imperfect taming of the wild dog can scarcely be considered an exception—cultivating neither grain nor fruit; naked, yet unwilling to bear the trammels of clothing; looked down upon as the lowest in the scale of human beings, yet bearing themselves proudly, and contemning the drudgery of the man who despises them; confiding, cheerful, kindly of disposition, yet treacherous, inflexible in revenge, and glorying in massacre; enjoying the most unrestrained

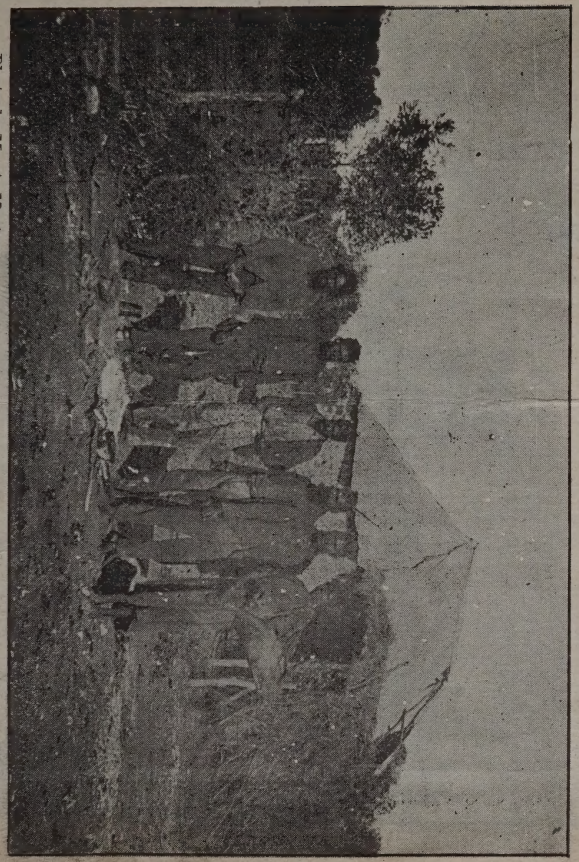
state of liberty, yet in daily danger of death; living, in short, in a state of society resolved into its very first elements. Having no worship, and little superstition; revering no God, dreading no devil, under subjection to no man; knowing no law, human or divine; without rule of conduct in this life—without hope of reward or fear of punishment in the next. Here is a people truly singular as their own vegetable productions, unique as their own animals, and in a condition as rare in the world as their own swans. They are a race worthy of the study of the philosopher, meriting the attention of the philanthropist, and requiring the aid of the missionary. This people have been taken under the protection of the British nation, and claimed as its subjects—their country has been taken possession of—their existence has been overlooked—their rights have been unregarded—their claims have been unattended to—their lands have been sold by the British Government without reference to their existence. Should not some reparation be made? should not some trouble be bestowed upon their improvement in the simpler arts? should not some expense be incurred for their advancement in civilization, and for the gradual amelioration of their condition? and should not some care be taken to secure the purchaser in the peaceable and quiet possession of his purchase? By whom should the burden of this be borne? By the few straggling settlers, by whose means the land is secured as an extension of the dominions of their country; or by the British nation, which has acquired so vast a territory by such a bloodless conquest, and upon such easy terms?

This sketch would not be complete without some account of their personal appearance. Their height is about the average height of man; beautifully formed about the chest—their limbs spare and sinewy, and rather showing activity than strength—easy and graceful in their carriage—their countenance expressive—their features tolerably regular. I have seen some of the young women rather prepossessing—their eyes sparkling, their teeth regular, the bust and torso in early life elegantly formed, but soon losing the plumpness and firmness of flesh. I do not think they live to a great age. They cannot tell their own ages. I have not seen any very old among them; indeed, there is reason to think that few die a natural death. I have known death hastened in more than one instance.

GEORGE FLETCHER MOORE.

[We should be glad to receive from all our colonies similar minute descriptions of the aborigines. The subject has been sadly neglected.—EDITOR.]

DRESSED FOR CORROBOREE—A MAN AND WOMAN FROM THE NOR'-WEST.



MURCHISON ABORIGINAL STATION HANDS.

Photo by Mr. A. Morton

Hobart.

perhaps, as an index to direct the inquiries of the English capitalist. A little reflection must convince him that the system hitherto in operation is at variance with every principle upon which the foundation of sound mercantile dealing rests. The formation of the "Bank of Asia," and the sanction and support given to it by some of the most able and intelligent of the English mercantile community,* afford a reasonable ground of hope that the existing evils may soon be swept away; and it will then be seen how long—how unjustly—how unwisely India has been neglected. She offers a return by far more rich than any other British colony, for the employment of skill and industry and capital; and every Englishman may rest assured that it is by the extension of these alone, while we are lessening the boundaries of the ancient rule in India, we can deserve and gain from the natives that acknowledgment of interest which can promise any lasting endurance to our own.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

THE DISPERSION SYSTEM OF COLONIZATION, AND UNIFORM PRICE OF ALL LANDS EXAMINED.

THE following observations have arisen from a perusal of the Report of the Commissioners of Land and Emigration in the Colony of Western Australia; and in the absence of other methods of stating evidence why that report should not at once be received and acted upon a letter has been addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, of which the following is a summary:—

In viewing this document, we proceed at once to that part which treats of the proposed tax upon all lands in occupancy, as well as in fee-simple. The premise to this tax is, that "large districts of appropriated lands are kept in a state of unprofitable wildness, from the want of labour and capital necessary to render them productive." So long as stock-keeping is the staple pursuit of Australia, thus long will the large districts remain "wild," though not unprofitable. It will be shown that these districts (pastoral) are as far from being "unprofitable," in the European acceptation of the word, that to attempt such a course would be to render them yet more barren and unproductive. A single sheep requires *three acres* of average land in Australia whereon

* The shares have been well taken up in India,—the whole of the arrangements are completed, letters patent from the queen in council have been conceded, and the Bank of Asia will shortly open for business.

to feed; a common-sized flock amounts to £700. This would be under the care of one man. Thus £2000-worth of property, represented by the 700 sheep, would require 2000 acres of land, and the utmost value of that land would be got out of it by the attendance of *one man*. It is not, therefore, the want of labour that causes these districts thus to remain in a seemingly unprofitable state: it is the nature of the soil itself, which imperatively demands of the settlers that they should, for their mutual benefit, isolate their locations, so as to place their flocks and herds beyond the chance of collision with each other; the apprehension of which, in fact, compels them to portion out the feed much in the spirit in which Abram and Lot agreed to separate their flocks:—"And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; and Abram said to Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen." Just so we separate from each other, that there may be no strife amongst us, nor amongst our servants.

It is an axiom, nowadays, with the new school of colonial economists, that "dispersion" is injurious, because it prevents combination of labour. This is undoubtedly true of an agricultural country, where every fifteen or twenty acres requires the labour of one man, whereby it may be rendered productive; but it is arguing from the particular to the universal, if this rule is insisted on as applicable to pastoral districts, where the labour of one man is sufficient to attain the utmost value that can be had from 2000 acres of land.

There can be hardly two greater extremes than the pursuit of agriculture, every step of which involves combination of labour, and the adoption of pastoral occupations, in which such combination is seldom, if ever, required.

The adoption of such a plan, in the teeth of the definition of just taxation, viz. "a burden laid upon all, for the good of all," saddles the flock-master with a charge, that the agriculturist may have his potatoes and his pigs at a low price. This is a *partial* benefit, arising from the imposition of a *general* burden. The flock-master is in no whit benefited by the introduction of 100 or 1000 labourers; his market for wool is in England—his sale of stock is to capitalists. He may sell a few more pounds of mutton in the year to the new-comers, but hardly to the extent to cover the cost to which he has been put by the introduction of these extra mouths.

We are told that "the amount of the tax is to be so small, that the payment of it should be a matter of comparatively trifling importance to the *bona fide* settlers and cultivators of land," &c. Herein is the

mistake which runs through all the modern schemes of Australian colonization:—Enactments are made for cultivators of land, not bearing in mind that the land itself, in the most part, forbids this cultivation. It is quite true, that this tax would fall lightly on "cultivators," on the holders and tillers of the few rich flats and arable districts which Australia contains; for from one acre of such land they can get thirty bushels of wheat, worth £18, but not so with regard to the holders of the average run of pastoral districts. A few figures will serve to place this in a clear view. Three acres are required for one sheep; from that sheep we get 2½ lbs. of wool, worth, at the utmost, 9d. per lb. at the port, after all carriage and expences paid, but before freight, insurance, commission, brokerage, &c. are defrayed. Here is a sum of 22d., arising from the produce of three acres; a tax of 9d. is to be paid out of this; being 3d. per acre for three acres, equal to a charge of 40 per cent. on the flock-master's income. But how does it affect the agriculturist? An acre of flat land will yield, according to the average crops, say thirty bushels, of clean wheat,worth, on an average of three years, 12s. 6d. per bushel, or about £18 per acre; let us deduct one half for expenses, it still leaves a nett profit from one acre of £9, subject to a tax of 3d. per acre, or one-twentieth of the produce.

But there are other words, which, unless defined by figures, are too vague to be allowed to carry weight in a report. What is an extensive grant? What are small capitalists? Let us take an example:—"A small capitalist is one of, say £1,500 in stock. To represent this sum he has about 600 sheep. To feed these he wants 1,800 acres of land. We will say that such a settler starts at the beginning of the year: in June his ewes will have lambed; at once he doubles the number of his sheep, and requires double the quantity of land. If this man were wise, he would at first have secured as much land as he could get—not less than would be sufficient to keep his accumulated flocks for *one* season; that is, 3,600 acres of land. Such a flock would, after lambing, require two shepherds, at £80 per man, equal to £160 a year, as the whole expense of the establishment to which the proposed plan will, by way of taxes, add above 25 per cent.

The vast quantity of land which is required for the support of a flock of sheep may appear surprising; but on a mature consideration of the peculiar features of Australia, this surprise will pass away. In this country sheep seldom drink; in Australia we have regularly to water them, in the same manner that we read of the watering of sheep in the patriarchal times. Now a sheep is a slow-travelling animal, especially when feeding; and in Australia they cannot fill themselves

in a short time, as they do in England, but they pick a blade here, and a blade there, travelling all the while, but only to such a distance from the water that they can readily come back to drink.

Thus it is, that the fine pasturages, if more than a quarter of a day's walk from the water, are beyond the range. It follows, then, that the settlers must scatter along the rivers, going only so far back that the flocks can come down to drink at noon. It is in vain to try to force us to use this back land; nature has put a limit to our marches, and neither laws nor reports can help us over it.

There is in the next sentence of the Report a calculation, which, if it were not at variance with subsequent suggestions, might indeed induce one to tolerate some such tax, in consequence of the great benefits to arise from the impost. There is no doubt but that £20,000. a year spent in immigration would be a very fine thing for the colony; but the receipt of this sum is estimated on the supposition that the whole quantity of land originally granted is to be taxed. In order to be taxed, it must be retained; but that it cannot be retained is plain, from suggestions 3, 4, and 5, in which three-fourths of the grants are to be surrendered; leaving them only one-fourth to be taxed, cutting down the receipts on account of the tax in the same degree.

Again, the settler, who thus surrenders three-fourths to obtain full titles to the remaining quarter, can commute the money-tax by a further surrender of land, at the rate of one acre (value 10s.) for every forty acres, liable to be taxed. Thus, if a person had 20,000 acres, he would surrender 15,000, and receive a full title to the balance. He is then liable to a tax of 15,000 pence, which he can commute by a further surrender of 125 acres, and so on.

How many years must elapse before all the assigned lands in the colony shall be thus given up; and until all is surrendered, nobody would dream of paying a money-tax. What benefit, then, accrues to the colony at large, to justify such grinding and partial enactments on the pastoral owners? Are we not justified in calling for a more cautious investigation into the resources of the colony than seems to have been instituted previous to the production of this Report?

Upon what principle the recommendation of 1s. per acre upon private transfers of land was founded, we are really at a loss to conceive. It is a duty so very excessive, that we are sure it but requires to have the extravagance of it pointed out, to lead to a modification. True it is, that, taking the upset price of government-land, as subsequently recommended by the commissioners, it constitutes but a charge of

5 per cent.; but putting aside the consideration of that price for a moment, let us see what will be the effect on private transfers.

The value of land is not what any man or body of men choose to say it is worth; but its value is what any *bona fide* stockowner can out of its profits afford to give for it. For the truth of this, we refer to South Australia, where almost all the sales which have been effected in large blocks, fit for stock-keeping, have been sold under a system which, for a nominal rate of 20s. an acre, gives as a bonus three times as much as were really bought; thus in effect reducing the price to 5s. an acre.

Let us again have recourse to figures:—20s. an acre is to be the price of land; that will involve an outlay of 60s. on land for each sheep; the sheep itself costing about 60s. more. Thus a flock of 1000 sheep will cost £3000, and for land whereon to feed them £3000. more. In six months those sheep will lamb, involving a demand for an additional 3000 acres of land, costing a further sum of £3000. Money in these colonies bears an interest, in first-class securities, of 15 per cent. Here, then, is a charge of £450 annually for interest of money sunk in the purchase of land for feeding 1000 sheep. This charge became £900 a year as interest alone, when land has to be purchased for the first drop of lambs; in short, in keeping our books, we must charge £450 a year against each 1000 sheep. The keeping of these sheep at present costs, say two men at £80—£160; but by this enormous charge we increase our expenses nearly 300 per cent.

We will not take into consideration, though it might fairly be done so, that had these thousands of pounds, thus invested unprofitably in land, have been laid out in stock, they would have fructified at the rate of 50 per cent. per annum. We are content to take the calculation at the lowest. Let us now examine into the proportion which this interest of money sunk in a purchase of land bears to the profit of the animals fed on that land. The wool from 1000 sheep, at 9d. per lb. in the colony, would be £93; the value of 900 lambs, being the produce of the 1000 ewes, being in pretty equal numbers as to sexes, would average about 20s. each: thus we have £900—£93, say £1000, on which a tax (indirect) is laid of £450, being 45 per cent.

As then 20s. an acre may be said to be too high as an upset government-price, what, it may be asked, would be a fair one? That which was hitherto the standard in Western Australia, viz. 5s.; that which in effect and in practical operation, though not in appearance, was the price in the special survey system of Southern Australia, viz. 5s. Now,

if this be the government-price, the rate of private transfers will be lower, generally one half, say 3s.; on this it is proposed to put a duty of 1s. per acre—equal to 33 per cent.

To mention an instance which is within our own knowledge: A gentleman bought a tract of 10,000 acres from a settler in Western Australia; the price was £1,250. Now, if the duty had then been in force, there would have accrued to government 10,000 shillings, or £500, and this as a duty on a purchase amounting to £1,250. What would be the duty on such a transfer at home?—About six pounds stamps. What amount of purchase-money would be covered at home by this duty of £500?—The highest that the law recognizes, viz. £100,000 and upwards. Thus, for the conveyance of his lands, this gentleman would be taxed ninety times as much as the man who sells his estate in England.

Having stated thus far generally, we shall proceed to examine the seven suggestions, and the seven general measures, proposed in this Report for the consideration of government.

The first seven suggestions appear fair and equitable to all the settlers save those claiming under date of 1829. To these persons we submit, that these suggestions will operate harshly and unjustly; and for the following reasons:—The grantees of the years 1829 and 1830 constitute the chief body of landholders in the colony. These we shall keep separate, for their claims are very dissimilar, inasmuch as the proposed laws of forfeiture, on ground of time elapsed before improvements made, can reach the persons claiming in 1830, but cannot yet be stretched so as to take in those claiming as receiving grants in 1829.

A. Those claiming under regulations 5th, 12th, 28th, including all grants made before end of 1829.

B. Those claiming under regulation 13th, 1s.; 29th, 3d, 2s.; and 29th including all grants made in 1830, and before end of same.

The conditions of class A involved a proportionate number of emigrants in each party, before the claimant on behalf of such party could make good his demand. Now the very fact of the permission to select having been granted, should, at this distance of time, be taken as evidence that the claimant had substantiated his demand to the satisfaction of the then proper authorities. We submit, that it is not competent for the commissioners now to go behind this permission, and endeavour to find out on what data the proper authority at that time granted such permission.

It might now be impossible to bring forward persons and documents which eleven years ago could readily have been found, and which, unless an attempt be now made to impute corruption to the authorities, it may fairly be argued, must have been so produced previous to the "permission to select."

There were other conditions, which it is now needless to remark on; as, "return home at our own expense, if colony given up," &c. Unless the commissioners recommend the monstrous injustice of re-opening the inquiry into the fulfilment of these conditions, it must be taken that the grants or permissions of 1829 are conclusive as to the observance of the necessary rules by the claimants—that they are "permissions to select," or, in other words, "grants" in fee-simple, subject to condition of resumption, which is couched in the following remarkable terms:—

> "Any land thus granted, which shall not have been brought into cultivation, *or otherwise improved* or reclaimed from its wild state, to the satisfaction of government, within twenty-one years from the date of the grant, shall, at the end of twenty-one years, revert absolutely to the crown."

The letter of Mr. H. Twiss to Mr. Peel, under date 28th Jan. 1829, is clear on this point:—"As your terms were arranged during the existence of the old regulations, which allowed twenty-one years, no part of your land will be considered as reverting to the crown for want of cultivation, or otherwise improved or reclaimed from its wild state, to the satisfaction of the local government, within twenty-one years from the date of the grant of such respective part."

Now there cannot be one rule, or interpretation of a rule, for Mr. Peel, and another for each or any of the other grantees of 1829. It is plain, then, that every grant, or by whatsoever name it may be called, which bears date as issued in 1829, gives the original grantee, and his assigns or representatives, a period of twenty-one years before the land which remains uncultivated, or otherwise improved or reclaimed from its wild state, can revert to the crown; in other words, the grantees of 1829 have to 1851 to make these improvements, before resumption commences.

We are the more inclined to think this a correct view of this matter, because we find that in the case of the grant of land to Col. Latour, dated 29th September, 1829, and which was resumed by Governor Hutt, by notice of 27th April, 1840, that resumption has been cancelled by notice of July 13th, 1840; nay more, the resumption of

John Butler's land, granted in 1830, and resumed 27th April, 1840, is cancelled by notice of July 16th, 1840.

The very remarkable words—"to the satisfaction of the local government"—in the letter of Mr. Twiss, explains the obscure phrase, "satisfaction of government," which occurs in the regulations of 1828, 5th Dec. There we have pointed out to us the proper authority, to whose satisfaction certain things are to be done. It is not any person, or board of persons, residing at home, but it is the local government, or, as is more fully denoted in the regulations, 13th Jan. 1839, 3d Feb. 1839, and 20th July, 1840, in which the phrase is uniformly, "satisfaction of the Lieutenant-Governor, or other officer administering the local government."

Under these regulations, then, we find that the grantees of 1829 had twenty-one years from the date of their grants, wherein to perform certain duties or conditions, and we have it decided who is the judge of the due performance of these conditions.

We shall now endeavour to show what is the real practical interpretation of the words, "brought into cultivation, or otherwise improved or reclaimed," which occur in the old terms of 1828.

It is quite evident that the framers of these regulations, under date 5th Dec. 1828, contemplated two or more methods of fulfilling the conditions laid upon the settlers; the first, "brought into cultivation," meaning and including therein all or any of the pursuits of agriculture. But the very great proportion of the soil in Western Australia is unfit for cultivation. To attempt to bring this into cultivation would be madness; for it would involve an outlay of capital without a chance of return, and would render the land turned up by either spade or plough a barren waste.

It really strikes us, that the framers of these regulations, looking to the older Australian colonies, noticing the cause of their success, and the staple of their produce, predeterminately gave an option to the settler in Western Australia of fulfilling the conditions by turning his attention to pastoral pursuits. No man who travels through the Highlands of Ireland and Scotland, and seeing millions of acres under grass for the food of sheep, would call them "unimproved," or "unreclaimed from a wild state." No man in his senses would call certain noble Scotch lords "disimprovers," because they depopulated districts, that they might make them sheep-walks; nor accuse them of permitting land to become "wild," because they turn bad agricultural land to its proper state, that is, to pastoral purposes; so neither should the Western Australian settler be held to be an "unimprover," because he does not

struggle against impossibilities—because he turns the land he has got to the purpose for which it is adapted by nature—to the only use to which it can be put, namely, the depasturing of stock.

The result of some experiments on Australian soils, is, that European grasses, (except clover,) unless sown in moist situations, last but a part of a year—that the few patches of clover which have survived the heats of our summers, are preserved more as mementos of home than for any use; for the cattle, the sheep, the horses, nay, the very goats turn from it. The natural sward, sod, or turf, is never seen, either in Western or Southern Australia. The country can only be described as being sprigged over with tufts or stools of kangaroo grass, without herbage, or blade between tuft and tuft; nay, more—if, with a view to introduce artificial grasses, we plough up the native grass, we only render bad worse; for we destroy the hardy native grass, and our substituted plant perishes under the fervent heat of our summer. We cannot *till* such land as this, and yet this land constitutes more than five-sixths of the whole surface of the country. Should we then lose it, because we are unable to coerce nature, and bid "the desert blossom like a garden?" Common justice demands that the standard of improvement (we will not call it cultivation) should be in accordance with the nature of the soil; in this case, therefore, dissimilar to that set up for arable land.

Let then the phrase, "otherwise improved," be interpreted to mean, "otherwise improved, as the nature of the soil, of which the grant is composed, shall require;" then, indeed, may the authorities very properly demur if the *arable* land be not in due proportion "cultivated," and the larger, but more inferior block of pasture-land, improved by the depasturing of stock.

So much for the settlers of 1829, who should have twenty-one years, from the date of their grant, wherein to perform certain conditions, and those conditions should be interpreted according to the spirit of the regulations—affording an option to the settlers as to the method in which they will so fulfil them. A word or two on the score of the settlers under the regulations of January and February, 1829—in both these we find "a license to occupy," on proof of introduction of capital which the settler is prepared to invest in the improvement of land.

Under the latter list of rules, are three methods of showing expenditure, so as to entitle the settler to the fee-simple of his grant. Investment of a nature specified before, (rule 3,) referring to where stock, implements of husbandry, and other articles necessary for productive management, or necessary for the establishment of the settler on the

land, are mentioned as "expenditure." Secondly, in cultivation; thirdly, in "solid improvements," as buildings, roads, &c. From this, we argue, that, if we had a claim to—say 10,000 acres, on account of property introduced—we could, under the fifth rule of February, 1829, claim our title in fee-simple, as soon as we had shown the "lieutenant-governor, or other officer," &c. that we had expended on stock ten thousand one shillings and sixpences, or a sum of £750; this might have been, if we chose, expended in "stock," provided that such expenditure was made before the expiration of three years from the date of the grant. And on this "expenditure in stock," we claim a fee-simple, whether we had depastured this stock on our own land or not; at all events, stock-keeping is recognized as a valid investment of capital, available to the attainment of the full title—and properly so, as by it so much capital was introduced into the colony.

On our examination of colonial records, it appears, that nearly 40,000 acres are included under the following heads:—

1st. A deficiency being found in one grant, the grantee was to select his land elsewhere, and hold in two blocks.

2nd. Where the returns to 1837 specify "not surveyed."

3rd. Where the returns to 1837 specify "boundaries not fixed."

The fifth "suggestion," and the latter part of the seventh, are particularly cogent on the holders of the first class, inasmuch as the fifth gives the holders no credit for any surplus expenditure over and above what would be sufficient to claim full title on one block; although, if they had received all their grant in one block, they would be able to receive the full title of the whole from the very same expenditure.

Now, it must be borne in mind, that this receiving grants in two or more separate blocks, was not the act of the grantees; they had Hobson's choice—"that, or none." The then authorities found themselves coerced to this plan; for, on examination, some grants were found to overlap on others, so that one or other of the owners were injured. On this and other accounts—as the arrears in surveying, &c., to which we need not now refer—the system arose of giving the full amount, indeed, to which the grantee, under the existing rules, substantiated a claim, but giving in two separate parcels; but now it is proposed to punish them for doing what they were forced to do, by refusing to allow credit on one parcel for any surplus expenditure, to be carried to the account of the second lot; and even a further time for improvement is, by the latter part of suggestion seventh, denied. But, although we complain of the stringency of this suggestion, there is no

such mild word for the proposition embodied in the first part of No. 7. There is to be no extension of time for the performance of location duties, on the plea "that the boundaries were not marked out." In the name of all that is just, how was the grantee of an unknown grant to perform certain duties? Suppose a grantee of 1000 acres of the Sussex district applied for his boundary lines, the answer would have been, what it is to this day—"You must wait till a surveyor can be spared to that district." Suppose he had not waited, but had gone to Sussex, (though, where that was, could not then be defined); that he had spent not 1,000 eighteen-pences, but £1,000 in improvements; that when the surveyor was spared, it was found that he was located, not on the grant intended for him, but upon the land of John A. Nokes; would the grantee then be allowed to carry forward the value of improvements to his own grant? Clearly, by suggestion 3, he would not; for, to secure part of his original grant, he must surrender three-fourths of it, besides losing all his fixed improvements, which must fall with the land to the fortunate John A. Nokes.

This is not a forced case, but was of frequent occurrence. We saw a re-survey made of part of the town-site of the seat of government, by which the entire boundaries of allotments that had been in use for years were altered, until the accumulated error at last became nearly equal to a whole allotment.

If these things happen when grants are measured by the link, what may not be anticipated when carried on on a large scale, and applied to grants where they are calculated by half miles and chains? It is unjust to deprive a man of land on the ground of non-performance of duties, where the grantors, or their servants, never pointed out where such duties were to be done.

There is yet the class No. 2, where the land is returned as "not surveyed." This is in effect similar to "boundaries not fixed;" but we have kept them separate, as in the returns they are divided. The entire quantity of land under these heads is about 20,000 acres—a total not worthy the consideration of government, even if by the resumption they were not inflicting a hardship, not to say rank injustice, against some settler. If A be required to do certain things in a certain place, and by a certain time; and that place be unknown to the persons requiring all this of A, as well as to A himself; so that A fails in the performance of those duties within the specified time; how does A infringe any of the requisitions laid upon him—for all such conditions are limited by possibility? There, an insuperable obstacle, an "impossibility," is shown to be the hinderance to the per-

forming the duties. Should A then be punished for not overcoming this impossibility?

The grantors undertook to survey the country previous to allotting; at least, they forbid any location to be made until the survey was made; they have failed to carry out their promises held out to intending settlers; shall the settlers then be punished? Shall the grantors come in, taking advantage of their own wrong, and oust the grantees from their land on the ground of "conditions not fulfilled," when they, the grantors, were themselves the persons who placed the obstacles in the way of their fulfilment? Oh no! common feelings of equity would forbid this harsh measure—this monstrous injustice—being carried into effect.

The sixth "suggestion" has the effect of propagating all this harshness to the assignees of the original grantees.

A few words on the seven "general measures." The first is unexceptionable; the second, for reasons to be presently detailed, objectionable; the third, as well as the second, is founded on the general and popular mistake, that Australian lands are uniform, or nearly so, in quality; that sections of half square miles are of use in all cases; that there is an analogy between lands and the employment of lands in Australia and in Great Britain. Here is the fatal error uniformly fallen into by those who, to first-rate talent and general knowledge, have not added practical experience.

There is no country in which a large block of land would be found more mottled with first-rate arable land and absolute desert scrub, than is Australia; within gun-shot, in the midst of the most luxuriant growth, may be seen thousands of acres of land on which the very grasshoppers would starve. Within the same 320 acres, or half of a square mile, could be found land well worth twenty shillings an acre, and more not worth the paper on which a gift of it would be written. Why then take a uniform rate of value for land, the most part of which is worth next to nothing? If twenty shillings be the value of an acre of good land, it is more than the value of 100 acres of scrub; yet, as we are to buy in "sections" of 320 acres, we may get 20 good acres, and 300 bad. If Australian lands were like English, then a uniform price might be fairly demanded for a "section," for the chances would be that the majority of the acres would be worth the upset price. But the reverse of this is true in Australia. Take a block of 20,000 acres, in any part of that continent, excepting some few favoured spots, the chances will be, that above 17,000 acres will be found unfit for any thing.

We have already shown, that the upset price of twenty shillings on all lands would work a ruinous effect on the flock-holders. Much has been said and written on the "sufficient price;" it appears clear, that this price is one which, by the produce of the sales of land, furnishes a supply of combinable labour sufficient to call forth the full productive powers of that land; always premising what has been generally left out in the consideration of the question—that attention be paid to the average production of similar lands in similar countries. That the "sufficient price" be settled at a rate which can be paid out of the produce of these lands, still leaving a profit to the capitalist who embarks money in these lands.

We will suppose that A selects 100 acres of good land; that he pays twenty shillings an acre. This sum, being expended in emigration, will afford him such a supply of combinable labour, as will elicit the full productiveness of the land.

The fertility of this arable land is such as to enable A to pay this twenty shillings out of the produce of the second year, and leave a handsome profit; but if A purchase stock—say 1000 sheep, to feed which he wants 3,000 acres—he will require two or three men to attend them, and no more. Here, then, is the supply of labour which is requisite to call forth the full productive powers of 3,000 acres of average feeding-land in Australia. The passage of these three men would cost £60; the "sufficient price" to raise this sum would be a charge of barely five-pence per acre for the purchase in fee on the 3,000 acres. We have looked at this matter hitherto, considering the settlers to be divided into two great classes—the agricultural and the pastoral interests; and we have considered them as not being combined. No doubt, they may be combined, and where they are so, the arable land should be charged at a price proportionable to its value, and the pasturage proportioned to the value of its produce.

But, although, in some cases, these two great pursuits may be combined, yet it is not in every case, nor on every grant, that it can be done; for there are many grants on the Swan River alone, which, with a nominal acreable extent of 1,000 to 2,000 acres, yet, as far as nine-tenths of these acres are or can be productive, they are useless, and for this simple reason—the river-front, for a chain or two deep, will bear cropping, but the back land will be found incapable of being cultivated; nay more, in many cases is *poisonous* to stock.

Yet this is to be forced upon us by general measure No. 3, and we are to pay twenty shillings an acre for what would be ruinous to our flocks. We will go further, and say, that no man in the colony can

tell, save by trial, whether any spot is free or not from the influence of this poisonous matter; yet, being coerced to buy in sections of a uniform shape, we may, unwittingly, be paying our money for what is not only no good to us, but may be absolutely injurious.

So much for these three general measures, which, if put into effect, must still further retard, if not altogether check, the colony.

We object to the second—firstly, because it is unjust to demand a uniform price for land which is most irregular, and unequal in its quality.

Secondly, because nature herself has fixed the value of the productiveness of this pasture-land, and the proposed price would bear an unjust and crushing proportion to such value.

We object to the third general measure—firstly, because a half square mile of arable land is more than could be used as a tillage-farm, and, if pasturage, would be less than profitable to the flock-master, inasmuch as it would feed but 100 sheep, and a flock, to defray its own expenses, must be above 400. Secondly, because, by compelling sales in any uniform figure, the person may be coerced into the purchase of poisonous land, without any knowledge on his part of such a misfortune impending over him.

We object to the fourth general measure—because, if twenty shillings an acre be a fair price for arable land, from which a profit of at least £7 a year can be made, it is far too much for the average pasture lands, from which the utmost value of production that can be obtained in wool and increase, is under ten shillings an acre per year.

We object to the fifth general measure—first, It is unequal, inasmuch as it taxes the flock-master's income by wool to the enormous amount of *forty per cent.*; while it taxes the wheat-grower only one 7-20th part of his profits. Second, that any actual money-receipts from this tax, available for purposes of emigration, are very remote, although the mischief and oppression to the land-holders are immediate. Third, that it will add, when it does come to be a money-tax, no less than 25 per cent. to the expenses of the flock-master. Fourth, that it is probable that the amount, when it did come to be a money-tax, would be exceedingly trivial, inasmuch as three-fourths of the source whence the £20,000 are to come is cut off, as appears by the previous suggestions; and the remaining fourth gradually redeemable by commutation for the tax on land.

We object to the sixth general measure—Firstly, that it is unequal, being five per cent. on a price of twenty shillings, but varying from 20 to 30 per cent. on the real value of the pasture-lands. Secondly,

that it is excessive in the case of the latter description of land, it being 20 to 30 per cent. on the real value; while in this country the stamp-duty on similar conveyances is about ten shillings per cent.

These are a few of the objections which most forcibly occur on reading this report; and we earnestly entreat the government to pause before the measures by it recommended are put in force; and suggest, that some means be adopted to take the opinion of persons of practical experience, for without sound practice to guide, the most ingenious theory may mislead.

In conclusion, we may observe, that the introduction of such a number of persons as is proposed by the report, (one thousand,) would be absolutely mischievous. There is at present a want of about *two hundred;* by swamping the market with eight hundred additional hands, the rate of wages would fall below a fair standard—below what, at the current prices of the colony, would serve to keep a man in comfort; while at the same time, by the influx of persons to the amount of nearly *forty per cent.* on the present population, provisions would rise in a vast proportion, still further aggravating the disparity between the wages and the prices. Then would the scenes of 1830 and 1831 be reacted; those who had money would leave the colony, as they did then—spreading far and wide tales of its ruin; and damping, if not extinguishing, the faint spark of public attention to Swan River which now exists.

To follow up this proposition, is to begin at the wrong end.* Let the colony be favourably known to the public, and kept before them by the means of public bodies and companies, who, by embarking capital themselves, will induce others to follow their example. Capital will create a want of men; capital will be laid out in the purchase of land; and the fund thus raised, will introduce all that is wanted in the shape of combinable labour.

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* The writer can conscientiously declare, that two hundred souls would supply all the present deficiency in the labour market; and about £60 per annum would afterwards keep it up to a healthy level, until an increase of population and capital would require a further supply. To carry out these two hundred souls would not require £4,000—why, then, raise from us five times as much?

When we get the attention of capitalists turned to us—when we can sell our thousands and tens of thousands of acres—then let these sales be a token that we want labour to make these lands productive; but until then, let us not be a second time ruined by the presence of labour which we cannot employ.